

## SNAKE SEASON

There are 11 species of rattlesnakes in Arizona. The most common in this region are the western diamondback, Mohave, and the sidewinder. If you are enjoying being outdoors you should always be cautious and use care when walking or climbing in the desert or mountains. Many bites occur when people try to capture, kill, or bother snakes. If you happen to come across a snake just carefully avoid them and their path. Also, do not handle dead snakes or their severed heads because a reflex strike/bite can happen even hours after death.

If you suspect or know a snake has bitten you seek medical attention from an emergency room immediately. It is extremely important to get medical treatment as soon as possible. If you are far from help or from your vehicle move slowly. You do have time to reach help, however, it is important to try and not panic. If you have been bitten on the hand, remove all jewelry before swelling begins. The following precautions are important if you have been bitten from a snake:

- Don't apply ice to the bite site or immerse the bite in ice.
- Don't use a constricting band or tourniquets.
- Don't cut the bite site or try to suck out the venom.
- Don't use electric shock or a stun gun.
- Don't try to capture the snake. This delays getting medical attention and may result in additional bites. Identification of the snake is not necessary for treatment. Treatment is not snake specific.

There are many things you can do to prevent bites:

- Remove litter, wood, paper, logs and debris from your yard.
- Wear heavy work gloves when working outside.
- Keep doors and windows tight fitting with good weather stripping.
- Make sure other openings are closed with double-sided sticky tape.
- Fill all cracks in the foundation of your house and around water faucets.
- Wear shoes when outdoors.
- If you live on Fort Huachuca and you need a snake removed from your home or lawn, call the Military Police at 533-3000. If you live in Sierra Vista you may call the Sierra Vista Animal Control Shelter at 458-4151.

If you need further information on snakes in southern Arizona please contact the Preventive Medicine and Readiness Service (PMWARS) at Raymond W. Bliss Army Health Center on Fort Huachuca at 533-5668 or 533-3959. Our environmental department has a great deal of information and tips for outdoorsmen and information on snakes and other creatures to watch out for. We also have educational material that may be of great use and interest. You may also call the Samaritan Regional Poison Center's Education Department in Phoenix at 602-239-2345.

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